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Letter dated 22 November 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 22 November 2000, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Aytuğ Plümer, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 64, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ümit **Pamir**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

00-76086 (E) 281100

Annex to the letter dated 22 November 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the statements made by representatives of the Greek Cypriot administration to the Third Committee on 10 and 12 October and 2 November 2000, under agenda items 107, "Advancement of women"; 108, "Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the special session of the General Assembly entitled 'Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century'"; 110, "Promotion and protection of the rights of children"; and 114 (b) and (c), "Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms" and "Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives", respectively. These statements contain unfounded allegations against my country. Since the Greek Cypriot party is exploiting every opportunity to distort facts pertaining to the Cyprus issue in every international forum where the Turkish Cypriot party is denied its lawful representation, I am compelled to respond to these allegations, once again, in writing.

Representatives of the Greek Cypriot administration refer repeatedly to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as "occupied areas". I wish to emphasize that the only "occupation" in Cyprus is the 37-year-long usurpation and continued occupation of the seat of the "Government of the Republic of Cyprus" by the Greek Cypriot side. The Cyprus question did not come about as a result of the Turkish intervention in 1974, as alleged by the Greek Cypriot side, but was created in 1963 when the Greek Cypriot wing of the Republic of Cyprus usurped, by force of arms, the 1960 binational Republic and occupied the seat of the "government of Cyprus", forcefully ejecting the Turkish Cypriots from all state organs and subjecting them to a brutal ethnic cleansing campaign between 1963 and 1974. The fact that a United Nations peacekeeping force was dispatched to the island in 1964 confirms that the Cyprus question began in 1963.

It should be recalled that the Turkish intervention was carried out in the wake of a coup d'état engineered by Greece and its Greek Cypriot collaborators on the island. The intervention was carried out in accordance with Turkey's rights and obligations under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee in order to prevent the forcible annexation of the island to Greece and to save the Turkish Cypriot people from total annihilation at the hands of the Greek Cypriots and the invading Greek troops. It will be recalled that the then Greek Cypriot leader Archbishop Makarios, in his address to the Security Council on 19 July 1974, confirmed that it was indeed Greece that had invaded the island in 1974.

The Greek Cypriot representatives have also alleged that the issue of displaced persons in Cyprus began in 1974 as an issue affecting only the Greek Cypriot side. The truth of the matter is that the issue of displaced persons came about when one fourth of the Turkish Cypriot population was rendered homeless between 1963-1974, as a result of the Greek Cypriot onslaught, during which 103 Turkish Cypriot villages were destroyed. Once again in 1974, in consequence of the Greek coup d'état, 65,000 Turkish Cypriots were forced to flee to the North to seek refuge in safer areas.

It should be recalled, in this connection, that the question of displaced persons was settled through the Voluntary Exchange of Populations Agreement reached between the two sides at the third round of talks held at Vienna between 31 July and 2 August 1975. In accordance with this Agreement, which was implemented under supervision of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), Turkish Cypriots moved to the North, and Greek Cypriots moved to the South.

On the issue of missing persons, it is ironic that the Greek Cypriot representatives can claim that the Greek Cypriot administration considers this issue "as a purely humanitarian problem whose solution is long due" when it is the same administration which has been abusing and manipulating this humanitarian matter for political propaganda purposes, rendering its solution difficult. The aim of the Greek Cypriot administration is not to determine the fate of the "missing" but to continue the false propaganda they have been generating on this issue for many years. In line with this policy, the Greek Cypriot administration has been deliberately misleading the Greek and Greek Cypriot families of the missing persons, all these years, by having them believe that their loved ones are alive. Such cases have been unfolding one after another in South Cyprus. Recently, the Greek Cypriot press carried the story of the Greek sergeant, Christos Koukoularis, who died in combat on 16 August 1974 and was buried in a mass grave at Lakatamia (South Cyprus) military cemetery about a week later. Despite the fact that this was known to the official Missing Persons Service of the Greek Cypriot administration, it was deliberately kept secret from his family, as was relayed by his brother Petros Koukoularis to the Greek Cypriot daily *Politis* of 25 May 2000:

> "We believed throughout that Christos was alive. After 26 years they tell you that your brother who was a missing person, finally was not a missing person and that he was dead and buried at the cemetery in Lakatamia. The tragedy of our family is fit for the *Guinness Book of Records*. My father died in October 1993 and my mother in August 1996. They died with the grief of my brother. A big game was played here in Greece as well. Many parents believing stories of missing persons having been seen in Turkey, wasted their lives and a lot of money in order to be able to see their sons. My parents too tried to save some money to do the same. To me this was senseless. The revelation (by *Politis*) was like a brick from the sky falling on my head."

The Turkish Cypriot side has consistently stated that the Committee of Missing Persons (CMP) should be allowed to complete its mandate, in accordance with its agreed terms of reference, procedures and suggestions of Your Excellency, contained in your letters addressed to the two parties in 1996. It is the rejection of the above-mentioned criteria by the Greek Cypriot administration that prevents the completion of the mandate of the CMP. The Greek Cypriot side should put an end to the political manipulation of this humanitarian issue at the expense of those who have lost their loved ones on both sides and allow the CMP to resume its work as soon as possible.

With regard to the living conditions of Greek Cypriots and Maronites living in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, I would like to stress that all Greek Cypriots and Maronites are accorded the same rights and facilities as those enjoyed by other residents, without any discrimination. Their living standards are on a par with those of Turkish Cypriots in the area. As also indicated in the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Cyprus of 26 May 2000

(S/2000/496), all necessary measures have been duly taken by our authorities to further enhance the living standards of the Greek Cypriots and Maronites residing in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and to ensure their continued well-being. Similarly, the claim that Greek Cypriot children living in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus "are deprived from secondary education" is completely baseless. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus provides free elementary and secondary education to all its citizens, including the Greek Cypriot and Maronite children resident in Northern Cyprus. Greek Cypriots who have their school in the Karpaz area are taught by Greek Cypriot teachers with the same text books as Greek Cypriot schools in South Cyprus.

On the other hand, the dismal living conditions of the Turkish Cypriots currently residing in South Cyprus remains to be a great cause of concern for the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Over the years, illegal detention, torture and forcible expulsion of Turkish Cypriots in South Cyprus has become an administrative practice of the Greek Cypriot regime. They continue to be faced with inhuman social, economic and racial discrimination, and their freedom of movement is restricted by the Greek Cypriot police for surveillance purposes.

Allegations regarding the "destruction and plundering of cultural heritage" in Northern Cyprus have been conclusively refuted not only by the Turkish Cypriot side but also by independent sources, including the relevant Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Mr. van der Werff, General Rapporteur of the Subcommittee on the Architectural and Artistic Heritage of the Committee on Culture and Education of the Council of Europe, who had come to the island with a delegation of experts to study the situation regarding cultural property in both North and South, in paragraph 5.3 of his report, which was published as a document of the Council of Europe on 2 July 1989 (AS/CULT/AA (41)1), stated: "We saw no churches destroyed, though St. George in Limnia (in the North) was listed as such." More recently, a Council of Europe Rapporteur on Cultural Heritage, Mrs. Vlasta Stepova, who visited both sides of the island in November 2000, also confirmed that there was no "vandalism of cultural monuments" in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

It is, in fact, the Greek Cypriot side which has been trying since 1963 to eradicate all traces of the Turkish-Muslim heritage of Cyprus. During 1963-1974, mosques, shrines and other Islamic holy sites in 103 villages across the island were destroyed, including the Grand Mosque in the town of Paphos in South Cyprus. In this connection, paragraph 5.3 of the aforementioned report of the Council of Europe is revealing:

> "We noted with regret the complete destruction of the main mosque in Paphos. The whole area has since been flattened to give way for a widened road junction and a car park. There is no memorial to the existence of the mosque. Below the road a Turkish bath complex remains hidden in rubble and vegetation awaiting restoration. The Turkish Cypriot cemetery by the nearby St. Sophia Mouttalos mosque is dilapidated."

Today, the Greek Cypriot side continues to show utter contempt for what is left of the Turkish-Islamic heritage in South Cyprus where shrines are under threat of disintegration due to total neglect. The existing mosques in South Cyprus such as the historic Bayraktar Mosque, Hala Sultan Tekke Mosque and the Ömeriye Mosque have been the target of bombing and arson attacks over the years.

With regard to the accusations levelled against my country on the alleged "deliberate change of historic names" in North Cyprus, I would like to state that it is absurd to expect the Turkish Cypriot people, who have inhabited the island for centuries, to use, when referring to geographical names, nomenclature other than their mother tongue Turkish. The Turkish Cypriot people have as much right as the Greek Cypriots to refer to geographical names of their homeland in their own language. Such accusations are indicative of the intolerance displayed by the Greek Cypriot side to everything that has Turkish origins and also explain the mindset which is at the root of the Cyprus question. In this context, the allegations pertaining to "alteration of the demographic character of the island" are also totally unfounded. In fact, it was the Greek Cypriot side which attempted to change the demographic character of the island through an ethnic-cleansing campaign during 1963-1974 and the ongoing inhuman embargoes imposed on the Turkish Cypriot people since 1963.

In the above-mentioned statements by Greek Cypriot representatives to the Third Committee, there is a deliberate attempt to portray the Cyprus issue as one of "violation of human rights" by Turkey in order to cover up the responsibility of the Greek Cypriot administration in the violation of the human rights of Turkish Cypriots who have been subjected to massacres as well as inhuman embargoes since 1963. In fact, it is Turkey which saved the Turkish Cypriot people from annihilation at the hands of the Greek Cypriot administration and has tried to alleviate the suffering of the Turkish Cypriot people caused by the inhuman Greek Cypriot embargoes. If the Greek Cypriot administration is truly concerned about human rights in Cyprus, it should first of all apologize for the violation of the inalienable human rights of, and suffering they have caused to, the Turkish Cypriot people for the past four decades; put an end to the inhuman embargoes imposed on Northern Cyprus and concede the sovereign and equal rights of the Turkish Cypriot people.

The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus believes that a lasting settlement in Cyprus can be achieved through a new partnership between the two sovereign States in the island. To this end, the Turkish Cypriot party has participated in the process of United Nations-sponsored proximity talks in good faith since December 1999 and has put forward constructive, comprehensive and realistic proposals with a view to preparing the ground for meaningful negotiations leading to a comprehensive settlement. The five rounds of proximity talks have amply shown that the key to reconciliation in the island is the acknowledgement by the Greek Cypriot administration that it does not and is not entitled to represent the Turkish Cypriot people or the whole island and that there are two sovereign States in Cyprus. Unless the Greek Cypriot side adopts this fundamental new approach to the Cyprus issue, the chances of an early settlement will remain slim.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 64, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Aytuğ **Plümer**
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus